

30 April - 2 weeks

'All My Sons'  
by Arthur Miller

Directed by  
James Newton

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NEW VENTURE  
T H E A T R E

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## Double bill - 26 March to 2 April

### 'Fake'

By Mike Graney  
Directed by Arwen Matthews

There is always something magical in bringing a new piece of writing to the stage, and its characters to life for the first time. What is not always present (but I was handed when Michael first approached me with Fake) is a beautifully coherent script with rounded characters, immediate workable dialogue and above all an exciting, emotive subject matter. Add to this the fact that the play becomes site-specific and potentially immersive once a venue has been found and the project was irresistible to me! Being able to bring the author into the process is proving as helpful, nerve racking and wonderfully productive as always; and the NVT is a physically perfect venue for this premiere of his work.

Finding a cast with the talent and ability to trust and give themselves over to the work without being handed the script until they had found the inner life of their character through creative exploration, was key. Everything in Fake is, ironically, driven by truth. The lack of photos and synopsis are there, not for the sake of pretentious secrecy, but to build the reality of the event and experience for the audience who will walk through the doors of the venue and straight into a medium's tour in full swing...

*The Steven Eldritch Show comes live to the NVT as part of his sell-out national tour!*

*"Audiences are left stunned, uplifted and above all, comforted." says the Liverpool Chronicle.*

*The celebrated psychic medium is humbled to travel the country and meet fans of his TV show 'Parting The Veil', shown on the Alive Channel. In his own words, showing the warmth he is famous for - "I've touched so many hearts... I feel richer than a king."*

A quick search will show you how big today's celebrity mediums have become. Like their 19<sup>th</sup> century counter-

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### 'Lie With Me'

Devised and directed  
by Steve Coulson

It 1983, the then infant Channel 4 showed Meantime, Mike Leigh's film of unemployed life on a council estate. Featuring early performances by Gary Oldman and Tim Roth, and starring Phil Daniels it completely blew my 19 year old mind. I'd not encountered Leigh before and I could not bring myself to believe that this was not documentary, but actors, acting. I mean, I *knew* it was actors acting, because I



L. To R. Danielle White, Anthony Dale and Miranda Morris in 'Lie With Me'

knew Phil Daniels from Quadrophenia and Breaking Glass. But the characters were so real, the dialogue so convincing, the situations so reflected my own on my depressing Basildon council estate that it disturbed me as much as it thrilled.

So began my long held fandom. A decade later I met fellow fan Phil Jones (Radio Reverb's Goatee Phil) and we began Lewisham New Theatre, using Leigh's methods of working intensely with actors to develop realistic characters and situations. This resulted in a couple of well-received one-act plays at a London Fringe venue before new careers and relationships took us away from theatre for a while. Fifteen years after our last production - Bad Thoughts - I decided to revive the method for the New Venture. Lie With Me is the result

The recipe has been thus. Take 4 talented actors. Ask each of them to invent a character. Work with them indi-

*Continued on page 2, right column*

#### BOX OFFICE TRIAL

Box Office will be open noon to 2 pm on Wednesday 16 March, Saturday 19 March, Wednesday 23 March, and Saturday 26 March

parts they have large audiences flocking to see them in live performance venues but now they have their own TV shows too. The intimate emotional details of death and loss are pure fodder for cameras in this day and age of reality programming. We are still creatures who yearn for contact one last time, or burn to disprove that which has no scientific basis, even simply to watch the spectacle of the out-pouring of others, and pay to do so.

I hope that sceptic, believer and theatre goer alike will find themselves caught up in the action as they live an hour second by second within the action of Eldritch's touring show. Fake? Join the audience, to become his audience, and find out for yourself.

vidually, in isolation, for a number of weeks, mixing in back story and detailed current situation, and adding liberal amounts of personalised talking and movement, until the actor can comfortably 'inhabit' their creation. Then introduce them to each other, creating relationships, and situations in which they can improvise. From there a rich plot will develop from which you produce a script. Rehearse intensely, and serve. The reality of course is much harder, but Emma, Anthony, Miranda and Danielle have been truly superb. It has been a thoroughly enjoyable and often hilarious process, and Sarah, Darren, Debbie and Sian are beautiful creations. Together they have produced a moving and sometimes uplifting play about breaking free from the lies that protect us while holding us prisoner. Or not. Not all lives work out as they should – but the possibility that things might be, after all, what makes us believe.

## Open Forum on 19 February What kind of theatre should NVT be?

The Open Forum Meeting took place last Saturday. There were about 20 members who attended. There was some lively debate ranging from What Kind of Theatre do we want,? Do we need 2 performance spaces? Do we want to be restricted to a proscenium arch concept? Would we be duplicating the Studio if we made the Main an Open Space. The role of a Pros Arch Stage with regard to training actors, backstage, production people. Having the choice of 2 production spaces each having their unique atmosphere.

The meeting tended towards using the space as flexibly as possible for productions but with the ability to stage Pros Arch productions. Ideas such as electric folding seating, flats which can be removed to create a Pros Arch, the issues of lighting rigs and equipment and of course costs.

At the end of the meeting it was decided that Jerry would organise a small working group to progress ideas. It was also agreed that we need to obtain the services of a Theatre Architect to enable us to make informed decisions about the Main Theatre. If anyone out there knows of a Theatre Architect could they please contact me on 01273 446574 or 07762916888 or e-mail [jerry.lyne@btinternet.com](mailto:jerry.lyne@btinternet.com)



The Props Room, NVT's vital engine room with the key chief mechanics hard at work: Chris Pugh - Company Technical Manager, Richard Gamper - Company Set Builder, Tony Shoesmith - Company Facilities Manager and Michael Yates - Company Cleaner



Our Main Theatre, upstairs - awaiting decisions and money.

# Acting Class

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## 21, 28 March and 4, 11, 18 April Presence and Physicality – Ulrike Schilling

During this session we will work with the body as a tool in performance. Using a variety of approaches we will be looking at presence and play with the audience performer relationship. We will explore our physicality and work with movement employing a variety of hands-on exercises. Ulrike's classes utilise individual experience as a key to learning and understanding.

## Announcement of the season 2011-2012

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On Saturday 16 April at 7:30 we are having a social to announce the next season. This is a great opportunity to find out which productions will be staged, enquire about them, talk to the directors and mention your interest in particular productions, as well as general networking and socialising.

As part of the evening actors attending the 'working towards performance' workshop lead by Steven O'Shea will be performing prepared duologs and rehearsed readings of short scenes from a variety of plays. And of course our beloved bar will be open as usual, ensuring you will get the courage to volunteer for productions.

I am looking forward to seeing you there.

**Ulrike Schilling**  
**Artistic Director**

## Our fantastic new box office system Ollie responds to the letter writers

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I find it quite insulting to see our new box office system described as 'pathetic'. How about a bit of positivity about our fantastic new box office operation? Since it's inception every New Venture show has been a huge sell-out success and the booking and collection process has never been quicker or simpler. Indeed, as a result of this our finances are blossoming and every penny is going swiftly towards the improvement of this beloved building. No longer do we have to contend with guests reserving seats and then simply not showing up, leaving us out of pocket and with empty chairs.

For those of you of the anti-Internet conviction, you will have noticed that each newsletter now comes with a simple booking form for each show, which can be filled in and popped in the post with a cheque, and even gives you the option of personal confirmation to let you know your seats are reserved. But this is not all, we have also pulled together to personally attend to the phone and bar for four lunchtimes prior to the launch of each show (Wednesdays and Saturdays). Surely almost everybody could take five minutes out of these hours to make a short call and card payment? In addition, all

answerphone messages and queries are dealt with efficiently every day and the justification for the 50p charge is, and this may not surprise you, because the card payment service unfortunately does not come for free.

Tickets are selling faster and faster so you'd best be quicker and quicker, and if our new opening hours are not quite enough for you - we are of course always looking for volunteers.

**Ollie Donovan**  
*Treasurer*

## FOH and backstage helpers - a super idea!

Dear Editor,

In terms of getting more people to help both backstage and front of house, perhaps NVT should take a leaf from Mountview Theatre Club, a similar organisation to NVT before it became a theatre school in the sixties. Membership meant that if you had a part in a play, you were expected to help either front of house or backstage in the following play. No arguments. Obviously for some small cast plays, or very large cast plays, there was some leeway in which subsequent play you helped with. But the principal was you took on a responsibility. This probably meant that the young and free would do backstage, committing to a whole run, where the young parents or people who lived some distance away, would do a certain number of FOH duties.

**Shirley Jaffe**

# *Spectre Inspector at the New Venture Theatre*

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On Saturday 12th February I headed to the New Venture Theatre in Brighton to host my very first Ghost Hunt. The main reason, apart from the sheer fun of it, was to help raise money for the refurbishment of their main theatre (where I have actually performed on 2 occasions). It's a great theatre and has an interesting past.



Pulling this event together in a fairly short time frame was always going to be a daunting task, but it worked, thanks to finding a great Medium (Roz) and her partner Chris, and a team of Paranormal Investigators (Becks and Steph).

We had a great turn out of 20 which included friends and family, most of which had never experienced anything like this before. The evening was full of surprises, and nice ones which was a relief! We managed to raise well over £200 too. I am looking forward to hosting another one soon, so watch this space.

**Sam Holland**

## *Hannah Liebeskind's spectral experience at NVT . . .*

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Sitting in the warmth and safety of the NVT office and discussing a possible Seance, the idea of contacting past long gone residents of the theatre seemed a rather exciting and novel plan to raise money for the Main Theatre. However, as the night drew closer I found myself jumping at the sound of the heating coming on or convinced there was something watching me as I brushed my teeth, emptied the bin or did any of the hundred other mundane tasks my day seems to consist of. A few reminders that I doubt very much spirits would traverse planes of existence just to watch me water the plants and I'd steeled myself enough to take part in the first NVT séance.

Sam Holland had amazingly rounded up (for free) a local me-

dium and two paranormal investigators who came equipped with the power to contact the dead and electro magnetic field detectors respectively (you decide which you would prefer as your weapon of choice). Having created a circle of protection (designed to protect ourselves and the building from any would-be spectral trouble makers) we headed off in two groups to see if anyone from the past wanted a chat.

Our small, and rather pragmatic group, headed off with medium Roz who said she sensed a few child-like presences as well as a rabble of apparent family members desperate to communicate cryptic messages from beyond the grave. It proved an interesting experience, however our group

felt that our time spent with Steph, the paranormal investigator, held a little more evidence as to life beyond. Heading up to the Main Theatre, we sat in a circle, chatting, idly waiting for someone to talk to us. Our intrepid Artistic Director held firmly onto the electro magnetic field detector as it chirped out a series of beeps and whistles in uncannily timed responses to questions we asked.

I've left the experience no more sceptical or convinced as to when I entered, but will admit to having to sleep with the light on that night.

**Hannah Liebeskind**

## **Love Labour's Lost**

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One of the marvellous things about NVT's periodic short-story events is seeing how all the writers who contributed stories, differently interpret the source phrase. 'Love Labour's Lost' created a myriad of story styles which was reflected by the actors in their telling.

The event was once again a sell-out with the audience noticeably enjoying the fiction presented.

I was one of the story judges for this particular event. And I can tell you whittling down from the thirty-two stories received wasn't easy as the general standard was really very high. Yes I know they always say that in these sort of competitions, but this time it was most definitely true!

**Michael Graney**

**April newsletter deadline: Monday 28 March**

**Printing: Thursday 7 April**

**Stuffing & posting: Thursday 14 April**

## Our sponsors

Our sponsorship deal is £250 for a year's advertising on our website and in our brochure, newsletter and show programmes, plus 2 free tickets for each production in that year.

We need more sponsors, so please email [mikestubbs2000@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mikestubbs2000@yahoo.co.uk) if you have any ideas in that direction.



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## Upstairs Main Theatre Restoration Fundraising



Since launching our Main Theatre Restoration Fundraising last year, we have raised £5,700 towards our target figure of £20,000 for the initial stage and towards our overall target of £50,000. Many thanks to our Angels (who have raised over £2,900) donors and members for their valuable contributions and to a very generous member who has offered to match £10,000 raised by ourselves to achieve our initial target figure of £20,000